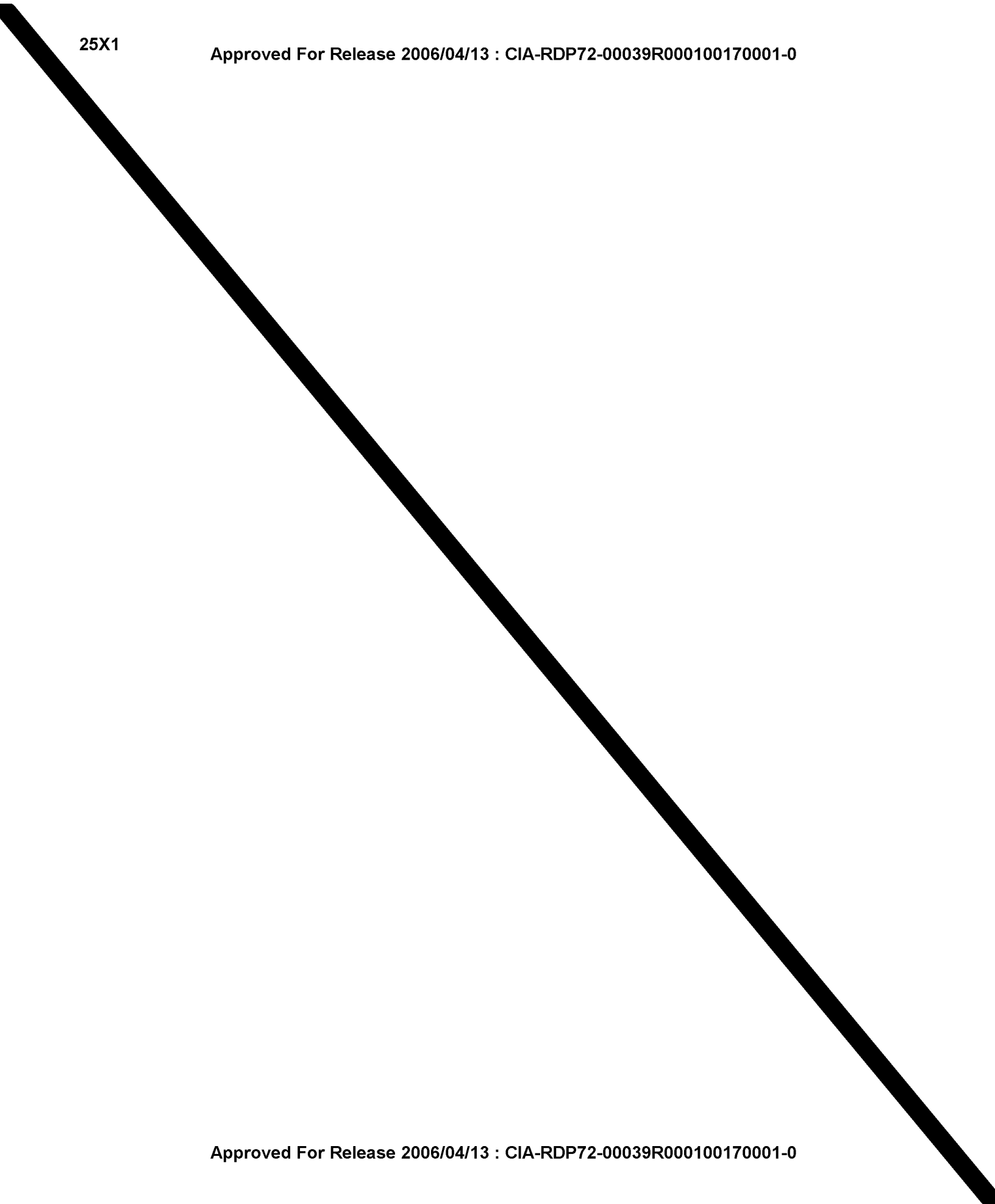
25X1

Approved For Release 2006/04/13 : CIA-RDP72-00039R000100170001-0



Approved For Release 2006/04/13 : CIA-RDP72-00039R000100170001-0

Approved For Release 2006/04/13 : CIA-RDP72-00039R000100170001-0

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: 22 November 1967

SUBJECT : Proposed Biography of General William J. Donovan, Director of OSS

PARTICIPANTS:
Mr. Otto Doering
Mr. Corey Ford
Mr. Lawrence R. Houston
Mr. Walter Pforzheimer

COPIES TO :
Mr. Houston - Orig & 1
Ex. Dir - 1
Mr. Goodwin - 1
HIC - 2

---

1. On 20 November, the participants lunched together and then conferred at length in the Historical Intelligence Collection (HIC) regarding a proposed biography of General Donovan which is being commissioned by the Donovan estate and the Donovan law firm. This project has been under consideration for several years and was initially undertaken by Whitney Shepardson with classified assistance from CIA. When it became apparent that Mr. Shepardson's age would not permit proper execution of the project, the well-known writer, Cornelius Ryan, was substituted as the author, again with CIA support. It is unnecessary to review the various problems which led to Mr. Ryan's withdrawal from the project and the DCI's ultimate decision not to go forward with it on the basis of CIA cooperation. It should be noted that any decisions taken by the DCIs in this matter are now reinforced by the problem of the Freedom of Information Act. Under this Act, if CIA were to give an outside author unlimited access to OSS files, it would probably be necessary to give access to any other authors who might be interested in some aspect of OSS history and operations.

2. When General Donovan left his position as Director of OSS, he took several cartons of files with him. These included more than 20 volumes of chrono files of correspondence from the Director to the White House, the State, War and Navy Departments and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Also included in these files was a set of R and A reports. This material also included a volume of

CONFIDENTIAL

FORM NO. 1 FEB 57 1132

(11-23-30)

Approved For Release 2006/04/13 : CIA-RDP72-00039R000100170001-0

Approved For Release 2006/04/13 : CIA-RDP72-00039R000100170001-0

proposals for the establishment of a centralized intelligence organization, clipping files, a two volume history of OSS and materials on many other aspects of OSS business. The classifications ranged from unclassified to TOP SECRET. These materials were maintained by General Donovan in his private law office, some under rather flimsy lock and key. Upon General Donovan's death, the Donovan estate agreed to turn over this material to CIA together with a large collection of postwar material which the General had amassed on matters of interest to him. This material was turned over to CIA with the understanding and agreement that they would be maintained by us under conditions which would make them available to a suitable biographer commissioned to write a life of General Donovan. The key parts of these "Donovan Files" are maintained in HIC with the remainder retained in archives [redacted] the latter group is readily identifiable for such use. STAT

3. In view of the decision of the present DCI not to permit Mr. Ryan (or presumably any other writer) to have access to CIA's classified OSS records other than the "Donovan Files" noted in the previous paragraph, Mr. Doering discussed the matter with Cornelius Ryan who felt that he could not undertake a worthwhile book under conditions less than his original arrangements. It should be noted that this is a matter of some sacrifice to Mr. Ryan who had given several months of his time in background reading and some study of the files, as well as considerable monetary cost to himself. As a result of his conversations with Mr. Doering, Mr. Ryan has now withdrawn from participation and the Donovan heirs have contracted with the well-known writer, Corey Ford, to undertake the biography. Mr. Ford is himself a veteran of OSS and co-author of a small book on some of its operations entitled Cloak and Dagger. He has also recently written a book on Nathan Hale entitled A Peculiar Service.

4. Mr. Ford has planned to do most of his work at his home in Hanover, New Hampshire [redacted] STAT
The bulk of our conversation turned on the question on how to make the "Donovan Files" material available to Mr. Ford in view of his reluctance to spend any great amount of time in Washington. Subject to official concurrence, it was agreed that General Donovan's news clippings files, almost completely dealing with OSS, could be shipped to Mr. Ford in Hanover for his use there. To these I would suggest we add the similar clipping files compiled by Kay Halle which she deposited here and perhaps also include one volume of clipping files on General Donovan (largely dealing with his postwar activities and death and the awarding of the National Security Medal) which HIC has compiled. Except for the

Approved For Release 2006/04/13 : CIA-RDP72-00039R000100170001-0

Approved For Release 2006/04/13 : CIA-RDP72-00039R000100170001-0

HIC volume, the Donovan and Halle clipping books have been pretty well co-mingled so as to make it difficult to distinguish between them.

5. With regard to the classified chrono files to the White House, etc. mentioned in paragraph 2 above, we are faced with a security problem in that much of this material is classified. While much of this material may be considered compromised by its long sojourn in General Donovan's law office, I believe that we must still consider handling it on a classified basis. Mr. Doering is planning to take considerable time of his own on leave from his law firm to assist in the preparation of this biography. He feels a deep commitment to it as carrying out one of the General's deathbed requests to him. Mr. Doering would therefore be willing to come down and review the classified portion of the "Donovan Files", marking the materials which he feels Mr. Ford will need to utilize. Once that has been done, the question arises as to how Mr. Ford can have access to these papers, particularly in view of his desire to perform his work at Dartmouth. One solution would be for Security to place a suitable three-combination safe in Mr. Ford's home while he is working on this book. Security, [redacted] 25X1
25X1 [redacted] has made similar arrangements in the past. A second problem is how to study the many volumes of the "Donovan Files" which are
25X1 presently [redacted] A considerable portion of this material is unclassified (other than the R&A Reports which are of minimal interest to Mr. Ford). It is probable that Mr. Ford should not be granted permission to screen this material [redacted] but perhaps such permission 25X1
could be granted to Mr. Doering. Alternatively, it could be brought up to Headquarters and stored but my recollection is that it comprises several dozen cartons. In any event, some of this material will have to be shipped or trucked up to Mr. Ford.

6. There is some material in HIC (largely comprising published periodical articles on OSS) available in few other libraries. It almost certainly is not available at the Baker Library at Dartmouth in Hanover. Mr. Doering has expressed a willingness to xerox this material at his law firm; however, the Curator of HIC is reluctant to let this material go for any period of time and perhaps it could be agreed to xerox this material at CIA for Mr. Ford. It would probably amount to less than 500 pages.

7. Included in the "Donovan Files" are three diaries which General Donovan maintained. These are his World War I diary, a diary of his Siberian trip in 1919 and a diary of his postwar visit to Laos. As these are of considerable historical, rather than intelligence

Approved For Release 2006/04/13 : CIA-RDP72-00039R000100170001-0

Approved For Release 2006/04/13 : CIA-RDP72-00039R000100170001-0

interest, the Curator of HIC proposes that they be xeroxed here so that CIA can maintain a copy, and that the originals be returned to Mr. Doering for inclusion in the Donovan papers at the Columbia University Library.

8. With regard to any questions that might arise under the Freedom of Information Act, it would seem that CIA is in the clear insofar as requests from other authors for OSS material is concerned. It can be quite honestly stated that the material to which Mr. Ford will have access is comprised of material in General Donovan's estate which the executors have deposited here under an agreement that they would have access to it and can be considered private assets of the estate. It therefore can be seen by others only with the approval of the estate which should take it out of the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act. The remaining CIA assistance which is suggested here is so minimal as to be easily disguised and denied.

9. It is suggested that some provision be made with Mr. Doering and Mr. Ford for an informal security review of Mr. Ford's completed manuscript.

Walter Pforzheimer
Curator
Historical Intelligence Collection

Approved For Release 2006/04/13 : CIA-RDP72-00039R000100170001-0